



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of Information

Press Service



Release- Immediate

*File*  
July 23, 1926.

CHIEF U. S. GAME WARDEN SHELDON  
SAYS CONSERVATIONISTS ARE WINNING

H. P. Sheldon, who recently assumed his duties as chief United States Game Warden of the Biological Survey holds that the American sportsman is winning in his fight to conserve and perpetuate the wild game of the United States. As State game and fish commissioner of Vermont during the past five years, Mr. Sheldon has been in close touch with the activities of the many agencies cooperating in the work of game conservation and speaks with a knowledge born of experience.

"A study of the present game situation in the United States," he says, "does not seem to warrant the pessimistic declarations we commonly hear. The melancholy atmosphere that some adopt when speaking of game conservation is an inheritance from that dark period in American game history when destruction was the rule, and when the scattered, unorganized sportsmen had not yet found the weapons with which to check it. That distressing period is definitely concluded and I sincerely believe that we are well forward in a new advance, which will be marked by a constant increase in the numbers of our valuable species of fish, birds, and animals."

The year 1960 will not offer to the individual the abundance of game that was available to the sportsman of 1860, but the future, he prophesies, will certainly provide a reasonable abundance of game to a greater number of sportsmen, if present policies and projects are consistently adhered to.

"Never before have the sportsmen and conservationists of America been so strongly and effectively organized; never before have the official agencies of conservation found such large sums of money at their disposal for advancing their

work, and never before have we seen game and fish laws and regulations more generally supported by public approval than at the present time. A glance at the game registers proves that the destruction of game that went on throughout the century just past has now been solidly checked, and that most species, particularly the migratory birds, are actually increasing. We are now able to count a profit where heretofore we have had to realize an annual loss. Slight though these gains may be, they represent the wide difference between victory and defeat. These gains indicate also that the policies and systems of game conservation, the legislative structures, and the educational and enforcement agencies that have been formulated after a century of conflicting opinion, narrow prejudice, apathy, and ignorance, are right in their main principles and that we may safely expand them to increase future effectiveness.

"I do not wish to assert <sup>that</sup> all obstacles are safely past. There are many to which the sportsman and his agents must apply the most powerful solvent that money, interest, and cooperative effort and thought can distil. There is pressing need for anti-pollution laws, the training and employment of an adequate force of game protectors, provision for expanding the areas needed for the care and feeding of our increasing stock of game, the reduction of vermin, the study and control of disease, and the troublesome problem of harmonizing the rights of the landowner with the recreations of the sportsman who owns no shooting or fishing preserve.

"These, and many other requirements, seen and unseen, must be met, but I believe that past accomplishments warrant us in regarding the future with confidence. We shall overcome our difficulties because we are at last beginning to comprehend the sense of the Biblical instruction that 'a house divided against itself can not stand,' and that a safe, consistent, effective game conservation policy for America depends upon the submergence of personal discord. We require complete cooperation between the legislation of conservation and the science of conservation; between the State departments and commissions and the Federal Bureau of Biological Survey; between State and State, farmer and sportsman, and sportsman and warden."

Mr. Sheldon believes that the American sportsman, whose interest and support has made this progress possible, is entitled to the stimulation of quiet optimism as he prepares for the continuation of his effort to preserve and perpetuate our wild life.